

MS. MIATHORN: My name is Katherine Miathorn. Good luck. I'm a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation out of Oregon. I'm also on staff with the Intertribal Agriculture Council. I represent the northwest region. Out in Indian Country, we have a lot of idle land. Idle land means land that hasn't been farmed. In the farm programs, the USDA requirement is that land has to be farmed for the last five years to be eligible for any programs. This stipulation eliminates a lot of Indian land from being in the programs. We also have to have a five-year farming history. In Indian Country we are not required to file a Schedule F on our income taxes. Therefore, it makes us ineligible for farm programs because we don't file federal taxes on income derived on federal land. Again, it makes us ineligible to use the programs.

All of these stipulations by the USDA eliminate tribal participation. It's a great concern because there's a lot of funding -- granted there's a lot of funding allocated for tribes to use, but when we are not eligible to use them, then it goes back into the general fund. And the USDA looks at us and says, "We gave you the money to use, and you didn't use it. Why should we keep giving you more?" It just sets us up to fail. We don't have the history behind us to start in again. Cost share limits, you know, they're maybe be at 50 or 75 percent. The people who are making the decision as to what these cost share levels are at are people who are active farmers. They have tractors. They have all the equipment they need to go into production. When we come in with a beginning farmer or rancher that wants to start in, wants to start using their family's land, whatever the situation might be, they don't have that history. They don't have the equipment. So if they want to participate in the programs, they either have to buy it, lease it, rent it, borrow it, whatever, but they incur the cost right up front. They don't have the ability to start like someone else who has been in the business, whose family has been in the business that Grandpa will give someone their tractor, or whatever the situation might be.

We still have maybe it's discrimination going on in the Farm Service Agency. We have tribal members who have gone in and requested applications. They were denied the application by saying there is no funding. Even if there is no funding, FSA has to give the application to the person. And I think Zack was the one that had just mentioned something like that. And it's happening in other areas of the country yet. Last year I was out in South Dakota and came across a lot of ranchers out there that do raise a lot of horses, and it's predominant in Indian Country. Most tribes have huge herds of horses, maybe not running all on range units, but individually owned. These animals aren't being accounted for, and they are part of the culture of the tribes.

The National Agriculture Statistics, when they do their surveys, the information is sent to the tribes. Some of the tribes don't have staff or anybody to take care of those surveys, so they send it to maybe to the Bureau of -- and I'm talking about my own reservation right now. It was sent to Bureau of Indian Affairs. We have 13 range units on the reservation. There is maybe 75 to 100 head of wild horses on that reservation. And then the rest are run by -- leased out to cattle operators. When that survey was done, just off my reservation, went back to NAS saying that there was only a hundred head of horses on our reservation. And right in like a one mile space between my three sisters and another owner right across the street from us, we have over a hundred head of

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horses there just right there in that one spot. So the statistics are inaccurate. Regulations are prohibitive.

And I know that the USDA can change these regulations for the tribes because we are bound by treaty, the federal government is bound by treaty with us. And those changes can be made to assist us in getting our lands back into production and getting our tribal members back on the right track to produce income on their land to make them self-sufficient.

MR. RACINE: Janet.